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A piezoelectric element with a multilayer structure of piezoelectric plies (2; 20) having electrodes (6, 7; 21, 22) arranged between them is proposed that is provided with a lateral contacting of the electrodes (6, 7; 21, 22) in alternate directions via external electrodes (9, 10). The individual piezoelectric plies (4) are composed of a continuous film (2; 20) that can be folded during manufacture, that are entirely or partially provided with the electrically conductive electrodes (6, 7; 21, 22). The piezoelectric plies (2; 20) are formed by folding at notches (5, 5.1, 5.2) created at specified intervals transverse to the direction of folding, wherein the internal electrodes (6, 7; 21, 22) are formed by the metallized layers lying on the inside of the notches (5, 5.1, 5.2) after the folding.

(Figure 1)